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The Black Cat

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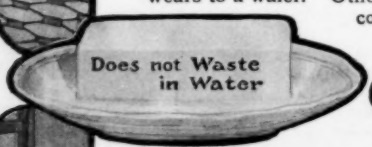

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The Black Cat

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Stamina.*

BY MARION HILL.

I HAVE quite a queer husband.

Some people say it is neither polite nor wifely for me to call Jerome "queer," and creates a wrong impression, but since he creates that impression all by himself, and no amount of my *not* calling him queer would make him any less so, what difference does it make?

Moreover, I like him that way.

Ten years ago when I married him he was exactly as queer as he is to this day. And the queerest thing about him is that he honestly thinks that *he* is the normal one, and that I am the one who is — to use his own word — "off."

Mother says that we are both queer, — that it is the price we pay for being stupidly wrapped up in each other, and that nothing would "knock sense" into us like having a dozen children to fuss over instead of ourselves.

Jerome told her it would knock *him* senseless, — and wouldn't she kindly cut off half a dozen to start with, till he got used to the general idea. She said she was afraid he had not much respect for his mother-in-law.

And Jerome spoke up nicely and said he *did*; that if it were

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not for mothers-in-law men would not have a scrap of fun, nor any wives, nor comic supplements, nor divorces, nor anything else nice.

So she had to forgive him.

Jerome and I have sometimes dared to speak to each other about our having no little voices around our house, — but the times have been rare and rather sacred, — such times, perhaps, as a June night, a Sunday night, when our windows were open and we could hear the organ in the church next door, and could smell the white roses in our garden; and we have come to the conclusion that childless parents are necessary in the world so that there will be love enough to go around and reach the parentless children, for we have noticed, when we have been taking food, and flowers, and toys to the orphanage and the children's wards in hospitals, that the people who have been really doing things for the little ones, things worth while, are the childless people. As I pointed out to Jerome, a mother who has even one little baby at home has not truly time to go to hospitals, and take care of lots of little babies, — the way we have. Every woman is a natural mother, and sometimes what turns her into an unnatural one is having a child of her own. It has often hurt me to have a mother of one child (whom she really neglects, too) make fun of Jerome and me because we are without any, when perhaps at the moment we are supporting a whole roomful of little ones.

Jerome has often asked me why I didn't "speak up and soak some facts home to her". But somehow we feel that certain things, — such as things about children, and having them, and not having them, — are in a way holy. So I keep from speaking. Jerome says I have no "stamina." I never know just what "stamina" is, but have found out that, according to his ideas, I lack stamina whenever I have been afraid to say something which he awfully wanted said, but was scared to say himself.

"And it is worse than shameful to let Magnolia O'Rourke have her own way, as you do," he said, recently. Magnolia works for us.

"But doesn't her way suit us perfectly, Jerry, dear?" I asked.

"It does," he replied. "But that's God's providence and not yours."

Mother thinks Jerome is religious on account of just such speeches; she does not seem to notice that he never uses beautiful words except when he should not. *As* the other night, — she was lecturing him about the importance of keeping good hours, and said:

"Jerome, hell is paved with poker decks and whiskey."

And Jerome said devoutly:

"Then, Grave, where is thy victory?"

She thought it was literary and lovely of him.

Magnolia *is* something of a problem though. We live away out in the suburbs where it is quite hard to keep a servant for very long. But Magnolia has been with us for seven years.

"The price of Magnolia O'Rourke," — so Jerome says — "is eternal unvigilance."

What he means by that is, that we do not dare to keep a watch on her. Magnolia told us at the start that she would remain with us only for as long as she'd "be lave be." By watching operations with bated breath we found out that she meant we were not to give her orders, nor advice, nor condemnation, nor even praise, but were to turn the house over to her and pay her wages. It sounds fearful but it isn't, for our work gets done, our meals are more than eatable, and of friction there is absolutely none. We lave her be. Not to be laved be is undeniably the thorn of servitude. When a Magnolia is pricked, she naturally prickles. By laving her be we save not only her skin but our own. And the quality of our laving be is magnificent. Whenever Magnolia dons her brimless straw with its curl-less feather, drapes a fringeless fringed shawl around her militant bones, and starts for air on a day *not* her day out, we pretend we do not see her go. Consequently she returns. And not infrequently she regales us with accounts of her contraband experiences.

"I met Mis' Finnigan be the ferry. I did. I met her. That same. And I says to her, I says, 'Good-day till ye, Mis' Finnigan.' And she says to me, she says, 'And yoursilf, Mis' Moriarty.' And I says, 'I'm none of Mis' Moriarty,' I says. And she says, 'Nor mesilf Mis' Finnigan,' she says. And belave me,

after the next look, we turn out both to be nather. Quare now. But God's trut', be the same."

Jerome says I ought to have stamina enough, if not to keep her home, at least to "squelch" her once for all when she gets back. But if lack of stamina keeps a maid, who wants stamina?

This question of stamina never became really serious until Jerome thought it would be economical for us to keep chickens. He borrowed a "broody" hen and set her on fifteen eggs.

"And when they hatch out, I really beg of you," he said, becoming pleading, "not to get fond of them and christen them and thereby render them forever sacredly immune from the roasting-pan and the stew-pot. I really beg of you, Blossom."

There ought to be a period of outlawry for names, — there truly ought. Just because I was born in April and was possibly a pink and white and rather sweet baby, I was called Blossom. Which was perhaps all right. But such a fair and perfumy name ought never to be bestowed in perpetuity. It ought rather to be leased out for fifteen, or at most eighteen years. When Jerome forgets himself in a crowd and calls, "Oh, Blossom, look!" half a dozen hopeful men look too, — at me, — then it takes all the strength they have to keep from dropping dead. I feel sorry for the poor things. Parents are not careful enough about naming their children. Running loose on a hilarious earth, there are enough fretful Peaces, chattering Silences, tarradiddling Truths, black Lilys, and gray Roses to stock a menagerie.

Yet when all is said and done I am happy and thankful that Jerome does not see the incongruity of Blossom-ing me. So long as a woman's husband loves her she can never grow middle-aged. What an annoying word that is. Humanity, too, is the only sufferer from middle-age. To be a middle-aged anything-else is to be in one's heyday, — we eat middle-aged apples, pick middle-aged daisies, hook middle-aged trout, rave over middle-aged sunsets and buy middle-aged potatoes. But a middle-aged woman might as well be a suffragette and be done with it.

This is getting too far away from the chickens, though.

Twelve of them hatched out.

It made Jerome quite oratorical.

"Blossom," he said, "let me insist upon a few things." It

was a Saturday afternoon, — he always gets home earlier on Saturday, — and he had rapturously shed his collar and his belt and was sitting on the wheelbarrow in the back yard, contentment and speculation in his eye, a pipe in his mouth, slippers *on* his feet and the chickens *at* them. "These chickens are not to be made into pets. They are not a matter of sentiment. I am not raising chickens to be companions of my old age, or anything like that. They are a plain business proposition. They are intended to keep us in eggs, to provide us with an occasional dinner. So don't expect *me* to buy *them* eggs for their Saturday night shampoo, or broilers for their Sunday supper, or to sell them to Goggins, your cerise-haired butcher, for thirty cents in their feathers and buy them back, bare, for a dollar and a half. Remember, I am only on a salary, Blossom, not on the race-track. I admit it is brutal to make pets of animals and *then* to murder them. The whole thing therefore resolves itself into this, — don't get fond of the chickens."

"Jerome," and I shuddered in spite of myself, "would you really like to kill one of these little things?"

"Perhaps not," he answered. "But what does that prove? Nothing. I often do not *like* to put a dollar in the missionary plate, nor *like* to shave, nor *like* to get up in the morning and go to work, — but this lack of personal liking only argues my own weakness of moral fiber, not that the things themselves are demoralizing and execrable. You can see that?"

Yes, I could see it. But the chickens were so sweet and cunning!

Nor did I like to have Mr. Goggins called *my* butcher just because he has red hair. When the meat is good, Jerome calls Goggins *his* butcher; and when it is tough, he's *my* butcher.

My want of stamina, though, kept me from protesting. And Jerome went right on:

"A woman's vaunted sensibilities are very largely bosh, Blossom. She sentimentalizes over killing an animal for food, yet the feathers in her hat are torn from an innocent bird, the very shoes on her feet are the hide of an inoffensive animal."

So they were. I felt rather ashamed of being a woman It never struck me till the middle of that night that Jerome was

wearing an elk's tooth on his watch chain and that he was shod in inoffensive animals, too. It was too late then to say anything. The woman who wakes up a man in the middle of the night from a sound sleep to tell him his shoes are made of leather takes a risk.

All I could think of at the actual moment was a meek, "But you'll kill only the roosters, won't you, Jerome? Where would be the economy in killing a thing that will lay eggs?"

"Of course only the roosters," he said.

Well, I'd rather planned for that. For Mrs. Mulligan, the lady from whom I had bought the setting, said that eggs with crinkly ends would be roosters, — that the crinkles meant the tail-feathers, — so of course I bought the smoothest she had. Jerome got off the wheelbarrow and walked away before I could tell him.

Time proved her very nearly right. They grew up six hens and one cunning little darling of a cock. The others died. And they died so easily. If a chicken only devoted itself to life as faithfully as it does to death there would be money in the poultry business. Two of them lay down and laboriously drowned in a shallow pie-plate of water. One swallowed yards and yards of shoe-lace, taking it to be a millenium-sized worm. One undertook to explore and investigate a cat. The fifth garroted itself in an unbaited mouse-trap. I buried them all and cried over them.

The others thrived splendidly. Without telling Jerome I named them in order to tell them apart. They were Buff, Cuff, Duff, Fluff, Huff, Muff, and Caruso. I was going to call him Puff, but he stood on his toes, threw back his head, swelled out his chest, shut his eyes and went "Squawk! Squawk! Squawk!" till it *had* to be Caruso.

And he was the darlingest of them all.

Either the irony of fate, or just plain every-day chicken contrariness made him attach himself to Jerome, or rather, try to, for it must be said of Jerome that his stamina held out, and he absolutely refused to be cajoled. But Caruso recognized Jerome as the only other man on the place and stuck to him for company, walking dreamily at Jerome's heels all around the yard, picking purely imaginary crumbs from the hem of Jerome's

trousers, occasionally flying up to tweak Jerome's seal ring, hoping it might be a lump of unripe tomato or something of that sort. And Jerome had to put him to bed every night, for the others would go without him, and Caruso would fly to the edge of the flower-box outside the dining-room window and would hump up his feathers miserably and croon a sort of "Father, dear Father, come home with me now," till Jerome would crash up from the table, dash out, grab Caruso by the willing legs and sling him into the coop, — which was just what Caruso wanted.

Intelligent companionship and fatherly attentions at bedtime soon fattened Caruso to the prime eating stage. Even I could see that.

And Jerome led up to the point from a clever distance by saying one evening: "Well, I've paid the sheep's monthly board bill."

I felt and looked conscious smitten. A year ago Jerome had been induced by a mathematical friend to buy a lamb. The representation was that the lamb would gambol and fatten on our lawn grass and then be sold to the slaughter-house later for a fair profit. And so perhaps it could. But it was an adorable little lamb, — at least at first. Its name was "Marylamb, my Marylamb," and when it was washed and had pink hat-roses tied around its neck it looked just like a full-page picture out of Mother Goose. When the slaughter man came I sent him away. Then the lamb grew really awful. It butted, and broke fences, and ate the next-door lady's spinach, and attacked the man-on-the-other-side's cat, and tripped up Magnolia, — when she was carrying a pan of hot starch, too. Then it *had* to go. Magnolia said so. She said she'd had enough Donnybrook, — whatever that meant. "It's the baste or mesilf that gives warrrnin'." So after a lot of trouble Jerome found a farmer who would pasture it, — at so much a month.

If anybody thinks a lamb is a peaceful beast, let that person get one.

The pig was better. A pig really *is* sweet. It was tiny as a puppy when Jerome bought it, — from another mathematical friend. The pig was to eat the garbage at an actual saving of the garbage man's fee, and then was to be turned into flitches and

things at the time of year when the price of bacon rose. The piggie wouldn't eat garbage, though, and I couldn't blame it.

Its name was Sir Francis.

"And when it got to being tied up in robin's-egg blue satin ribbon," said Jerome, who had drifted naturally upon the pig after mentioning the sheep's board bill, "and having its picture taken, and being introduced to the company, and getting christened, I saw *it* on the pension list, too. But — "

The "but" recalled tragedy.

"Wasn't it awful?" I asked, shivering. For Sir Francis had fallen down the well.

"Not in the least," contradicted Jerome, viciously. "Though it would have been better to have dined off him, I admit. And before *that*" — pointing to poor Caruso who was listening pleasantly to the conversation — "falls down the well, too, I'm going to pot him."

Up to the last minute I honestly did not think Jerome *could* do it, even though I heard him sharpening the ax. I thought it was just to frighten me.

Moreover I made the mistake of being arch. Archness may be a potent charm in the unwedded, but it is a wife's death warrant. It was Caruso's anyhow. I said, smilingly. "Sharpen it all you please, but I know you haven't stamina enough to kill that chicken."

That decided him to do it. What I should have said, of course, was, "Go ahead, you brute. It's just like you."

Then he would have shown me at any price that it wasn't.

I rather think he weakened a trifle and tried to shift the actual responsibility, for when he left me, I presently heard Magnolia say, "No, sir. That I won't, sir. Not for much and more than much." He evidently tried her a second time, for again her voice rose, "I may earn me livin' an' earn it hard and thankless, but I'm no headsman."

Then he stalked out into the back yard. I watched him from the window. In one hand he had the terrible ax. Caruso admired it first with one eye and then with the other. Caruso had absolutely no premonitions. Even when Jerome stooped down and swung him up by the legs, Caruso just gave a surprised little

"Crrk!" at the unusual daylight attention, and curled his neck up to take a closer look at the tomato-colored ring.

I got all weak and ill and trembly and ran up to my room and shut the door and opened Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat. I generally get from it peace for all occasions. But I chanced upon no other line but this:

"The wine of life is oozing drop by drop."

It was awful!

When things were all over I heard our front gate click, and I looked out of the upstairs window in time to see Jerome stalking wildly from the house. He looked white and very miserable. And I was glad of it. He deserved to suffer.

I kept upstairs for ages. Hoping against hope, I finally called to Magnolia down the speaking tube, and asked her what we were going to have for dinner.

"The chicken, av coorse. And I say boiled, — with crame gravy."

Poor Caruso!

Jerome came back after a while, after a long while, just as dinner was being served. I'd been crying so that I was a sight and had to cologne my eyes and powder before I looked fit to sit at the table. I nearly wept afresh to see Caruso upside down on a dish with sauce over him and bits of parsley. I simply couldn't eat him. But I did not say so to Jerome. There's no sense in thinking so much of an animal that you don't think anything of your husband. So I let Jerome serve me. Then I covered my piece of Caruso all over with mashed potato. Jerome would never be able to tell *what* it was I had left.

And the way he tucked into Caruso was truly a sorrowful sight. I never thought it of Jerome. A woman may live with a man ten years and know very little about the coarser side of him after all. *I* was hungry, and chicken hungry, too, but Caruso would have choked me.

We never exchanged a word.

And then a ghostly thing happened,— outside, upon the edge of the flower-box, a fowl fluttered and perched, — just like "The Raven."

"Crrk!" it begged, invitationally.

Jerome pushed back his chair, stamped out, grabbed the fowl by the resistless legs, and disappeared towards the chicken coop.

Not till he returned and sat down again did I regain my vanished voice.

"Wasn't it Caruso?" I gasped.

"What?" demanded Jerome.

Then I remembered he had never heard the chicken's Christian name.

"Wasn't that our little rooster?" I amended.

"It was," said Jerome. His tone added, "Now come on."

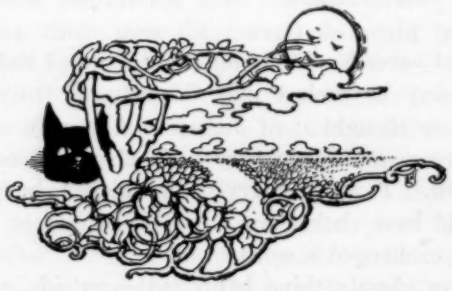
"Then," said I, sweeping the mashed potato from the fragment on my plate and dabbing it accusingly with a fork, "*who* is this?"

"*That,*" said Jerome, pointedly, "is a dressed fowl bought of your avaricious pink Goggin at a cost of a dollar and sixty cents."

Here he glared at me defiantly, fancying I was going to make fun of him because he was too soft-hearted to be a murderer, but instead I jumped up (taking a big bite first, I was *so* hungry!) and ran around to him and kissed him from one ear right down his dear good neck clear around to the other ear.

He drew a deep breath. He was so glad not to be joked.

I might have known he could not have killed *and* eaten Caruso. For that's the kind of queer he is, — a lovely queer.



The McShay Warning.*

BY F. RONEY WEIR.

SHALL never forget the night poor Aunt Maggie received her warning. I remember just how the old house shook in the wind and how the rain came rattling across the garden beds.

We had been jolly enough in the big living-room, with never a thought of death warnings; but we girls, as well as Aunt Maggie, were McShays, and that being the case, there lived in our minds a horror, a shadow, of which none of us could ever entirely rid ourselves.

Ever since the Duke of Ormonde ruled in Ireland, not one of the name — of our branch of the family, at least, nor of the other branch either, so far as we had been able to ascertain — had been allowed to surmise and hope and fear, like other people, about our taking-off. We were invariably warned, not only that the event was to take place, but the exact date of our death was always made known to us.

It was my twentieth birthday, the tenth of August, and Aunt Maggie had made me a surprise — just a bit of a supper, and the young folks, neighbors mostly, in for an evening's merrymaking.

Poor Aunt Maggie! To think that her death call should have come on the very night when she had been to so much trouble and pains to make others happy.

But she was always doing for my sister Nora and myself, and had been a mother to us ever since the day Father had seen that horrible old woman sitting on a box in his mail car, with seven green jewels blazing about her neck.

Jerry Flynn came in to play the fiddle for us on that night of the birthday dance. Jerry was always glad to come at Aunt

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Maggie's bidding; and I remembered afterwards of suspecting that it was as much for the purpose of trumping up an excuse for summoning Jerry to fiddle as it was to please us that Aunt Maggie made the party.

Aunt Maggie was still on the sunny side of forty, with shining dark hair and cheeks like apples; and Jerry was a discerning Irishman; a sort of a grasshopper fellow, who fiddled, and joked, and danced his way through the world, but mightily good-looking with it all.

Aunt Maggie owned her little home in the outskirts of our thriving Western city, and was well-to-do, and such a housekeeper and gardener and manager in general, was rarely found.

But right in the face of this budding romance, there it came — The Warning.

Nora and I were to sleep downstairs in the best bedroom. After all three of us had sat about the kitchen fire sipping tea and talking the party over until after one o'clock, joking and giggling like three girls together, Aunt Maggie had gone to her own room upstairs. Nora and I with our finery strung about the parlor, still sat and talked sleepily. We both had lovers who had been at the dance, so we did not lack for interesting subjects of conversation.

"Hear that blessed woman stamping about up there," said Nora. "Will she never get to bed?"

"Every window must be closed, I presume, for fear of the rain beating in," I answered, "and how it is coming down! I warrant the Queenie girls get their new hats ruined on the way home. There, Aunt has forgotten something and is coming downstairs again."

The moment I heard her step on the stairs a chill crept round my heart. Aunt Maggie was not coming downstairs with her usual strong, springy step. In fact, for a moment I had a fancy that it would not be Aunt Maggie at all who would presently open the stairway door, but somebody less natural and welcome.

It was Aunt Maggie, however, who opened the door, slowly — slowly, and came toward us with a face as white as chalk.

We both cried out to know if she were ill.

She staggered to a chair and sat down heavily — stolidly, like an old, old woman.

"And I to be jigging and dancing, and even thinking of marrying again!" she whispered between white lips, "I! and death at my heels at the very moment! Why can't a woman remember that she is old! Old!"

"Aunt Maggie, what is the matter?" gasped Nora, although I think she knew the truth even then.

"Poor girls! Poor girls!" sighed Aunt Maggie, "you'll be orphaned again when I go."

Then Nora screamed aloud and fell over in a faint.

I rushed about getting water and a little whiskey, and we bathed her head and brought her back, but Aunt Maggie moved half-heartedly and in a daze, with none of her usual skill and alacrity in such emergencies.

"Oh!" gasped Nora, with her first returning breath, "I wish none of us had been born McShays! If we must die, why not let us go, as other folks do, without warnings!"

"It's not that!" I cried out at my sister. "It's not that! Who said anything of warnings?"

"It was just that!" corrected Aunt Maggie, solemnly.

"I wish," cried Nora again, "that you had never gone upstairs alone to that gloomy old room! I wish you had stayed down with us!"

"It would have come down here just the same," Aunt Maggie answered. "It was due to find me wherever I was."

Nora buried her head in my lap and I fell to crying.

"I went upstairs," continued Aunt Maggie, "without a thought of age or death — God help me! I was thinking of Jerry Flynn and his fiddle. In place of my prayers I sat down upon the edge of my bed smiling, and said over a foolish compliment which he whispered to me to-night between the dances. Then I looked up and — "

"Was — it — the same?" I breathed, awestruck.

"The same," she answered lifelessly, "an old woman, clothed in black, sitting calmly in my calico-covered bedroom chair, with a chain of green jewels about her neck. Sick unto death with fright, I counted the gleaming things — "

My aunt paused again, dreading to tell us the number.

"There were twenty-four," she finished.

"Oh, God have mercy!" groaned Nora. "And this is the tenth! Only fourteen days more on earth!"

"Fourteen," repeated Aunt Maggie, and she was calmer. "It was just that way she sat beside your Aunt Mary's bed, with one great burning green eye of a jewel on her breast, and your aunt went at about five in the morning. It is seldom, though, that a McShay dies in the first part of the month. There was one other that I knew of — Dennis McShay, who was thrown from a horse and killed."

The remainder of that stormy night was a horror never to be forgotten. We sat all night together talking in low, uncanny whispers, until the gray came peeping in at the windows. Then we got up and began to set the house to rights as for a funeral. Aunt Maggie ate a little breakfast, but Nora and I could not choke down a bite.

During the forenoon Jerry Flynn came dropping in and raised a great to-do when we told him.

"It's just Irish superstition!" he declared. "There's nothing in it. You're not sick, are you, Mag Roach?"

"No," answered Aunt Maggie, calmly, "not yet."

"Well, then!" stormed Jerry. "A body can't die if they're not sick!"

"There's time," said Aunt Maggie, solemnly, "and there's also time to make my peace with God. Think how many people are hurried out of the world unblest and unforgiven."

The next two weeks were terrible ones. Aunt asked us not to mention the matter to any one else outside of the family, and we did not. She went about freely, making preparations for the twenty-fourth. One or the other of us always went with her, and never for one moment was she left alone.

"But I am the best protected woman in the world," she said. "Neither flood nor fire nor accident could hurt me until —"

Jerry Flynn she refused absolutely to see again after that first day when she bade him good-by. "No, Jerry," she made answer to something he said to her, "we are not for each other. Some younger woman will make you happy. My day is past."

And still we watched in vain for any signs of disease upon the face of the dear woman. She was pale, to be sure, and there were dark circles about her eyes, but that was not to be wondered at — she had received her warning. She went calmly about, getting her earthly and spiritual affairs in order. She made her will, paid all of her small debts, and on the twenty-third went to confession.

"She shall not leave the house Saturday. When she meets — whatever she has to meet, we shall be with her!" declared Nora for the hundredth time, and, "I agree to that," said Aunt Maggie. "No harm can come to either of you; you are McShays, and no McShay ever went yet without being warned."

"I dreamed last night that it was all a foolish superstition," wept Nora, "and oh, I wish that dream might be the truth!"

"But it is not," said Aunt Maggie, "and we might as well face it bravely. There was Dennis McShay, who saw her standing by the stile away back in your great-grandfather's day. She stood stock still with one blazing green eye upon her breast; and Dennis was thrown from his horse the following day and never sensed what hurt him. You see it was sharp work, for it was the first day of the month, and she had no time to spare. It was just one minute after twelve when Dennis saw her. But she wore a glittering necklace of thirty gems the night she came to poor old grandfather. He had even more time to prepare than I have."

As I have said before, on the twenty-third Aunt Maggie went to confession, calmly, quietly, as one whose end is near, and whose sins are light.

Nora and I, watching tearfully for her return, saw her meet some one at the gate. At first we took it to be Jerry Flynn, but it was not; it was a stranger, who handed her a paper and went his way.

"The fates lead me," she said to us, when we ran tremblingly to inquire. "It is a notice to appear at poor Pete McCarthy's trial. I will be a valuable witness for Pete, for I know that Pete was not two steps from his own door on that night when the man was killed in the saloon. Pete is none too particular when he is in liquor, but he is innocent of this crime of which they

accuse him. May I be spared to give him the good word."

"And the trial is — to-morrow?" gasped Nora.

It was no use arguing with Aunt Maggie to stay at home.

"If a woman would be unwilling to do her duty in my position she would be a queer sort," she would answer. "I must be in the court room when my name is called."

"If she goes, I go, too," whispered Nora, and although I said nothing, I knew that I should follow.

And so it came about that Aunt Maggie kissed us a solemn farewell and started for the court house at twelve o'clock. We went with her to the crossing where she was to take the car, and after she passed up the aisle, we both stepped in and seated ourselves near the door.

We saw her straining her eyes to catch a last glimpse of us where she supposed we stood upon the walk, and there was the tragedy of despairing love in her eyes.

Everybody knows there is really no more danger of accidents to a street car descending a steep hill, when the brakes are in order and the counterweight doing its duty, than there is when the car is running upon level ground. In fact, we had become so accustomed to that particular hill that we had forgotten its existence. Under ordinary circumstances, when the car slid over the brink without its usual stop and bump, we should not have noticed, but on that day we both stood up, white and trembling. The car was going down without the counterweight.

Aunt Maggie was standing, too — we saw that — and then, as the truth dawned upon the other passengers, women screamed, and began crowding into the aisles.

"Sit down!" yelled the conductor, with his own face the color of chalk.

Nora, with the rest, was in the aisle, and it was her arm he grasped, but she hit out at him like a mad cat, and, breaking from his hold, squeezed and tumbled and trampled her way to Aunt Maggie. I saw her throw her arms about her aunt's neck, and I saw Aunt Maggie fighting her off as if she had been the evil one instead of her own loving little niece.

By this time the car was flying, and I braced myself for

the inevitable crash. It came when the car left the track at the turn, and plunged through the plate-glass windows of the grocery store at the foot of the hill. The noise was like the world cracking in two; and after that I knew no more, for an old gentleman rammed his skull between my shoulders with such force that I lost all care and fear, and never knew, until afterwards, that I was saved from death by alighting and resting heavily upon two little women who had been sitting four seats ahead of me.

When my interest in life began to return I heard some one wailing like a banshee, and I said to myself, "I'm dead, all right, but the question is, am I buried, or are they waking me?"

But I was mistaken again; I was lying in the rear of the grocery store, and the street-car company's doctor was bandaging my splintered arm. The old gentleman who had so ungallantly struck me in the back sat by, with an unbecoming patch over one eye, and a badly swollen nose.

Presently I realized that it was Nora who was doing the wailing, and I raised myself and called out, "Oh, Nora, where is Aunt Maggie?"

And then Aunt Maggie herself caught me about the neck and kissed me, and cried out that she thanked the Blessed Virgin that I was spared and not seriously injured.

There were some in the crowd who could not boast as much, and they were not McShays either.

"Oh, Aunt Maggie," I breathed, "I am so glad — so glad that you — "

"Hush! Hush!" she answered. "Don't think of it any more. "I am safe — I know it! The death that was meant for me went over my head. When I got the notice to be at the trial I said, 'Here is the beginning of the end!' When I boarded the car I whispered, 'God help these other poor passengers, they are doomed!' When the car started down the hill I was not startled nor surprised; but when Nora threw her arms about me I tried to fight her off, but she clung like an old man of the sea, and the crash came. The moment it was over, and I righted myself, I knew that for me the danger was past, *and I knew why.* There was Nora McShay clinging as close to me

as my own skin. If death took me it must have taken Nora, too, and Nora had had no warning — "

"And bother the warnings!" cried Nora. "That old harridan with the black gown and the green beads can go into some other business after this! She has made one big blunder, and her power over the McShays is at an end."

"I wish," I growled, "the old woman with the beads had this broken arm."

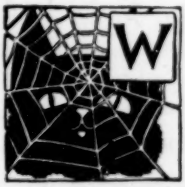
Jerry Flynn, who had come as soon as he could get there, helped me into the carriage with his eyes ever on Aunt Maggie.

"Maggie, dear," he whispered, as their hands met at the back of my neck, "shall I get you an engagement ring with a green stone?"

"If you do I shall throw it into the fire," said Aunt Maggie. "A plain gold band is good enough for me, and as the wedding is to be within the week, I think a wedding ring is all that we shall need."

The Black Leopard.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.



HEN Weinzler, the superintendent of the Swarlen Zoological Gardens, appointed Chotan Lal as an animal feeder, Methan, the head keeper, was guilty of treason to his chief. He cursed Weinzler's stupidity. From long experience with animals, Methan had grown suspicious and watchful, and when he saw Chotan Lal he placed him in the same class as the fivescore big animals that were in his charge. A colored man of any kind, in the eyes of the head keeper, should be treated with the same kind of caution that his men exercised when dealing with Theebaw, the African lion, and the appointment stirred him greatly.

On this account he displayed little good humor when instructing the new attendant regarding his duties, but Chotan Lal appeared indifferent to the other's unconcealed contempt. The Hindu was observing the animals, and he paid little attention to the words of Methan when the head keeper mentioned peculiarities in the disposition of each beast that came under the care of the new feeder. Methan noticed that his words went unheeded, and once again a string of libelous remarks concerning Weinzler rioted through his mind.

The Hindu stopped before the cage of a Nubian lioness, and regarded her quietly.

"One of the little mother's eyes is dull," he said, softly. "Has it been always so?"

Methan stopped talking and stared at the new hand.

"Whose eye?" he inquired sharply. Then, as the meaning of the Hindu's phraseology dawned upon him, he added: "What's wrong with her left eye?"

Chotan Lal did not answer. He moved closer to the bars and looked keenly at the lioness as she paraded up and down. Sud-

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denly, when her left side was turned towards him, his black hand darted through the rods and pulled the animal's ear.

The brute swung round with an angry growl and cannoned heavily against the bars, striking out viciously, but Lal had stepped back in the rear of Methan. For a few minutes the lioness stood snarling angrily, her eyes fixed upon the head keeper, then she continued her stealthy promenade.

The Hindu laughed softly.

"The little mother thinks you pulled her ear," he said, quietly. "You were the nearest to her when her good eye came to the front. She is quite blind on the left side."

The head keeper strangled a curse. He prided himself on making discoveries.

"Pull her ear on the right side," he suggested.

"It is your turn, sahib," said the feeder, "but if I might give a leetle hint, I would say do it with the hand that is not much good to you, for surely you will lose it." He moved on to the next cage as he spoke, and the head keeper followed.

The incident had an effect upon Methan. He cut the little details from his instruction lesson, and watched the other furtively. He thought that he detected a sneer on the Hindu's face, and he was conscious of a feeling that was rapidly undermining his self-esteem. The knowledge displayed by the new man came like a battering ram against his pride, and put the spike of silence through his tongue. So the Nubian lioness was blind in one eye! Stupidly he tried to reason when the blindness had come upon her, and how it had been overlooked till the Hindu's sharp eyes had detected it. But his hatred towards the other increased a hundredfold, and again and again he told himself that Weinzler was a fool.

Chotan Lal made another discovery. The newly arrived panther coughed painfully, and the Hindu listened intently. Methan eyed him sharply.

"Is he blind?" he sneered.

The other returned the sneer.

"No," he retorted, pointing to a scar low down in the chest of the ailing animal, "but the bullet that went in there did not have the strength to go right through, and it is now sitting where

the cough comes from. If it could be taken out his lordship would not cough."

Methan lost his temper. The Hindu's diagnosis was at variance with his own.

"Mind your own business," he cried. "That's no more a bullet wound than my head is a water-melon."

Lal did not reply, but his quiet laugh took much of the self-assurance from the other's tone.

It was the black leopard, "Simla," however, that stirred Chotan Lal. He spoke softly to the brute, and the leopard stood listening. He clucked his tongue against the roof of his mouth, and "Simla" shivered. He whistled softly, and the animal sprang into the inner cage and hid himself from view.

Methan watched the performance with distrustful eyes.

"Do you know him?" he sneered.

The Hindu showed his white teeth in a smile.

"No," he answered, "but my fathers knew his fathers and the black baby's memory is long."

Methan walked away, grumbling fiercely. At first he thought of braving the old German superintendent in his own office and protesting against the employment of Chotan Lal, but he changed his mind. He remembered the look that on former occasions had come into the eyes of Weinzler when any one had tried to upset his ruling, and the memory of the scenes awed him.

He was half way across the level stretch of ground that lay between the lion house and the office, when he turned sharply and walked back towards the cage of the Nubian lioness. A doubt concerning the discovery made by the Hindu came up in his mind and he wished to dispel it. Picking up a stick he inserted it between the bars when the lioness turned her left side towards him, but she took no notice. He withdrew the stick till the beast reversed, and then attempted it again, but the lioness turned swiftly and tore the stick from his hand.

"Damn him," cried Methan, "she *is* blind!"

He stepped backward from the cage and cannoned against Chotan Lal, who had walked up quietly behind him.

"It is a good job the sahib didn't test the truth of my words

with his hand," said the Hindu softly. "The little mother is very swift."

Methan turned away with a curse. Chotan Lal stood for a moment looking after him, then he sauntered down the row of cages and started on his new duties. But the head keeper and the Hindu were enemies. Methan hated the colored man because of his knowledge of animals; the Hindu hated the white man in return for the hate that was so obvious.

From his first day in the Swarlen Gardens, Lal singled out "Simla," the black leopard, for his special favor. The brute had hitherto proved himself the most untractable animal in the place, but before long he became the Hindu's special pet. The brute seemed to understand each word that was uttered by the new feeder, and acknowledged the attention shown it by curious half-frightened, half-angry motions. When Chotan Lal flung the beef into the cage, the leopard stalked it, walking quietly towards it from the far end of the cage, and then pouncing upon it with a mighty spring that shook the den. With a wild rush it carried the meat into the inner compartment, and then returning to the outer cage, stood licking its lips as if trying to convince the watching feeder that it had made a kill worthy of its prowess.

The exhibitions amused the Hindu, and on each occasion he would speak in a purring voice to his charge.

"The black baby is unhappy," he would say, soothingly; "he would love to kill."

Lal made peculiar noises by thrusting a finger into the corner of his mouth and flicking it against the inside of the cheek, and the sound had a wonderful effect upon the leopard. The beast would creep stealthily to the bars of the cage, and when the feeder continued to make the mysterious sound, "Simla" would thrust his nose through the rods and whine softly.

Chotan Lal was always sympathetic. "The black baby is sad," he would murmur. "The black baby would have meat that is worth stalking."

Three weeks after the Hindu's appointment, Methan met the superintendent on the path leading to the lion house, and a sudden burst of hatred towards Chotan Lal made him protest against the appointment. But Weinzler was obstinate. He turned a

deaf ear to the other's complaints and walked forward slowly, the grumbling Methan following in his rear.

The head keeper was still voicing his grievances when Lal stepped from behind the elephant house and passed them slowly. The colored man's gaze rested for an instant upon the face of Methan, and the keeper read the challenge. The Hindu's eyes carried a defiance, and Methan cursed inwardly.

That was the beginning of the war. The head keeper harried the Hindu, and the Hindu sneered openly and told his troubles to "Simla," the black leopard. Methan followed Lal in his round, found fault with him continually, and, whenever occasion offered, poured his complaints into the ear of the superintendent.

But the Hindu remained. Weinzler found a certain amount of pleasure in refusing to accede to the wishes of Methan, and, moreover, he saw little reason for the complaints. Lal was attentive to his charges and seemed to thoroughly understand the animals that were in his care. With "Simla" he was on particularly good terms. The black leopard, with his head resting on his paws, and his green eyes fixed upon the Hindu's face, listened to the muttering of his keeper, and tucked his lips back over the white teeth as if to express his sympathy.

Chotan Lal had occupied his position some three months when the climax came. Methan, making a round of the cages one evening after the gardens had closed, found the Hindu busy in the front cage of the black leopard, the sliding door between the two compartments being shut to keep "Simla" in the inner one.

Lal straightened himself and stared insolently at Methan as he walked by, and the head keeper stopped.

"What are you doing now?" he questioned angrily.

The Hindu sneered.

"The black baby has been bad-tempered to-day," he answered softly, "and I am repairing the spot."

Methan peered through the bars, and seeing no signs of the damage that the feeder alluded to, he stepped inside the cage and walked across to the spot where the Hindu was standing.

"What did he do?" asked Methan sharply. "Where did he damage the cage?"

Chotan Lal stood smilingly indifferent, his keen eyes fixed upon the other.

"Here," he answered, tapping the floor with his bare foot; "and here also."

Methan bent down for a second and looked vainly for any trace of repairs, then he straightened himself up and glared at the feeder. But Chotan Lal's gaze puzzled him. The Hindu was looking over Methan's shoulder, and the peculiar smile that flickered over the oily countenance disturbed the keeper. He turned hastily and muttered a curse as he moved a step back.

The sight that met his gaze stupefied him. While he had been examining the floor, the Hindu had craftily slipped the spring of the door leading to the inner compartment, and the black leopard was crouching half way between the head keeper and the entrance to the cage!

Chotan Lal's smile increased as he noticed Methan's hasty move backward.

"The black baby has found the way out of his hole," he murmured softly. "Do not curse too loud or he will become angry."

Methan strained his ears listening for a footfall, but the place was deserted. Chotan Lal was the last feeder in the house. The rays of the setting sun streamed in through the bars, painting stripes of fire across the leopard's back and lighting the emerald depths of his flashing eyes. The brute's tail moved backward and forward with a short jerky movement that Methan was surprised to find corresponded with the pounding of the blood within his own head.

Presently the head keeper took a step in the direction of the door, but the leopard's teeth showed like a streak of white against a black velvet pall, and he stood still.

"Don't annoy the black baby," whispered Chotan Lal. "He is bad-tempered to-day as I just told you." His own white teeth flashed like the leopard's, and Methan's anger increased.

"You black hound!" he growled hoarsely, "I'll kill you for this."

The Hindu laughed quietly.

"Only one of us can escape," he murmured. "When the

baby springs at one of us the other must rush the door."

Methan didn't answer. Once again he made a movement towards the opening in the front of the cage, but the flaming eyes of "Simla" followed him, and he stopped and glared at Lal.

"I guess you know which one he'll spring at," he cried, hoarsely; "I'll pay you for this."

The threat had no effect upon the feeder, but the leopard gave unmistakable signs that Methan's gestures annoyed him. He pushed his sinewy body a few inches closer and snarled angrily.

"It is an even chance," said the Hindu. "The black baby will surely scratch one of us when he springs. Look out!"

The leopard crouched, and Methan stepped back a pace. He knew well the peculiar friendship that existed between Chotan Lal and "Simla," and in his mind there was not the least doubt as to which one the leopard would attack. The blazing eyes of the brute had not been turned upon the Hindu since the two men had become aware of his presence, but Methan's slightest movement was watched narrowly.

The head keeper was not of a nervous disposition, but the situation was trying. The seconds were leaden-footed in their flight, and the silence gripped his heart. The only sounds that came to his ears were the soft pattering of the animals in the adjacent cages, and the clanking of the elephant's leg chains as he rocked himself slowly from side to side.

The leopard came forward two paces and crouched again, the green eyes watching the head keeper intently. Lal seemed utterly indifferent, and this indifference maddened Methan. His supposition as to which one the leopard would attack became a certainty to his own mind, and his rage at the manner in which he had been trapped, made him utterly regardless of his own life. With a cry of fury he turned and sprang at Chotan Lal, and the Hindu, being unprepared for the attack, was thrown heavily to the ground.

* * * * * * *

It was O'Rourke, the elephant keeper, who gave the alarm. He passed "Simla's" cage thirty minutes after Methan had sprang upon the Hindu, and he found the black leopard standing over

two men who were locked in a death grip. But the leopard had not been idle during the fight.

Methan never spoke after being dragged out, but Chotan Lal opened his eyes wearily and attempted to make the soothing sound by means of which he had been in the habit of bringing the leopard to the bars.

"It is not the black baby's fault," he murmured, as he waved his hand towards the angry brute inside the cage; "the baby didn't know which was which in the struggle. He has hurt me just a leetle — a very leetle, but he has squared my account."

Then he gave a deep sigh of satisfaction, as he glanced at the crowd that had gathered around the lifeless form of the head keeper.

The Deadfall.*

BY JOSEPH BARNETT.

HAT in thunder are we to do with him?"

Big Tom Hart asked the question, and it went unanswered.

The boy claimed to be nine years old, but as he sat on a rock apart from the men, staring out over the desert, he looked very small for his age, and very forlorn and helpless.

The three men had just finished burying his father. Two days before, the man, demented with suffering, had wandered into camp along with a worn-out burro carrying the boy.

The prospectors received them hospitably, and did what they could, but the man never rallied. As Sam Engle put it: "When he saw help, he let go all holds, as though everything worth doing had been done, and lay down and died."

In this Arizona country, where grown men sometimes died from hardship, and the strongest was never any too sure of his chances, the waif had a special claim on the hearts of the men.

"I believe I'll rustle up some supper," said Bill Percy. "I sure love to see that boy eat."

Sam went to give the burro a drink. And Big Tom strolled over to the boy.

A buzzard was on the wing lazily circling above them. Pointing to it, the boy said, "I hate them!"

Tom gravely considered the subject. "They're not such bad fellers," he protested. "They play fair, and always wait."

"They were waiting for Dad."

"Well, they didn't get him. The joke's on mister buzzard, this time, pard."

"I was watching them, all the time, and wishing I had a gun

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and knew how to shoot. Will you teach me, sir?" he asked, hopefully.

"Tom, pard; just Tom," the big man corrected. "Some call me Big Tom. I'm that cussed big, I get in my own way. Of course I'll learn you how to use a gun. But this idea of going gunning for buzzards! Now, pard, I'm surprised at you. If it was something you could eat, it'd be worth while. Or if it was one of them Apaches over yonder in the mountains, it'd be different. But buzzards! I'm surprised."

"I know Apaches," said the boy, eagerly. "They're Indians. May I shoot some of them for you? How far away are they?"

"Looks like it might be four or five miles to the mountains doesn't it? It's nearer forty."

"Do they ever visit you?"

"Not yet. But we're watching for them, all the time. We don't want them to call, without us seeing them first. They're awful bad medicine, and you want to be on the lookout for them. If you ever see anything moving, out that way, pass us the word, at once."

"And if I get a chance, may I shoot them?"

"Sure. That's what they was made for. After supper, I'll learn you how."

The boy was duly invested with his father's "thirty-eight," and though the men referred to it as a popgun, it was to the boy a badge of manhood. But even his pride in this was more than equalled by his interest in mining operations. He was always on hand when the blasts were fired, and soon learned the ways of dynamite. The men were pleased, and he was shown the powder cache in a cleft of the rock where the high-walled canyon made an abrupt angle some two hundred yards below the camp by the spring.

"You see, pard," explained Tom, "powder is sort of uncertain in its habits. And if it took a notion to blow up, it's safer to have it a good ways off."

"If it was to go off, what would it do?"

"Blow the whole side of the hill off, and shake us all up like an earthquake. I've seen less than half of what's there close

down a mine, besides killing a couple of careless fellers so dead no one ever found the pieces."

The powder cache had a fascination for the boy. He saw that though the cleft narrowed beyond the box of powder, it continued on. And one day, he saw a badger's bright eyes looking out at him. Filled with the spirit of adventure, he found that he could squeeze himself into the narrow part, and after some difficulty wriggled through into a small cave where the badger had its nest. Beyond this the cleft continued, and the boy, exploring it, came out at the badger's entrance on the side of the canyon. From there it was easy to climb the slope to the top.

When he told the men of his discovery, Sam Engle ventured the prophecy that the boy was built for a prospector. "You take it from me," he said, "he'll find a gold mine, yet."

Their tunnel was improving in its output, and the men were discussing a particularly promising specimen of ore, when the boy, breathless with running, announced something moving over toward the mountains.

"I've been expecting it," said Engle. "Luck and trouble always run together."

After a long look, the men decided it was a band of horses, and the chances were that they carried Apaches.

"Will they come here?" asked the boy, eagerly.

"I'm afraid they will, pard. This is the only spring in forty miles, and even an Indian has to have water. If they're Apaches, they're sure to know of the spring, and sure to make us a call."

When it became certain that the approaching body was a band of about thirty mounted Indians, and that they were heading in the direction of the spring, the miners set to work preparing for them, and cheerfully counted their advantages. They held the spring, the place was a natural fortification, and if they could stand off the Apaches for a week, the enemy would have to raise the siege for want of water.

"It's not likely they know we're here," said Percy, "and if we get the deadfall on them in the way of a surprise, the battle is half won. I'm going to herd the burros further up into the hills."

While the two were putting the defenses in order, the boy paid a visit to his cave.

"It's the safest place for him," said Sam. "This overhang and our breastwork makes us snug. And with him safe and a mine worth fighting for, it kind of puts ginger into a man."

"I've been thinking of it," Tom agreed. "I'll carry the powder away and hide it in the rocks below the mine. We don't want it here for some stray bullet to touch off."

Tom called the boy from his cave. "Here's a canteen of water and some grub, pard. All you have to do is to lie low and wait till you hear from us."

"I could watch for them from the other side, and let you know."

"Best keep your head in till you hear our rifles. When they're on the run, it'll be time enough to turn loose your gun on them. It might put an extra lope into the bucks, to be shot up from nowheres so far as they could see. But don't unlimber till you hear us in action. Remember, we want to surprise them. We'll be watching for them. You lie low."

When Hart shouldered the powder, he was surprised at its lightness. "Bill must have gone deeper into it than he realized," he thought.

The boy stationed himself at the badger hole, where he could see down the canyon. After long waiting, he saw the band ride into view at the mouth of the canyon, half a mile away. There they halted, and four braves, dismounting, scouted up the ravine, slipping from rock to rock till they reached the angle. Then they held a consultation, and one of them made a sign to the men on horseback. These rode forward, and halted around the angle, beyond the boy's range of vision.

He waited, listening. A rifle shot rang out. Then another, and another. After a moment, the boy slipped out of the cleft and began climbing. Every few moments, he looked back anxiously, but he reached the top, unmolested. Then, the extraordinary thing happened.

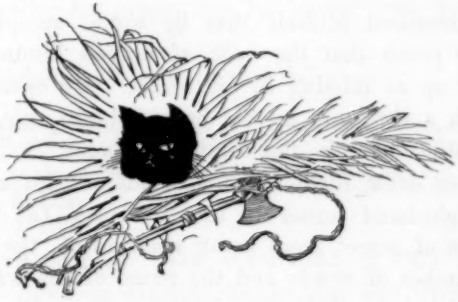
The whole angle of the cliff lifted bodily from the wall. An instant later, the roar of an explosion mingled with the crash-

ing of rocks shook the valley. And the band of Apaches disappeared beneath the avalanche.

Before the dust had settled, the boy crept over the debris, and made for the camp.

"It blowed the whole side off, just as you said it would, Tom," he proudly announced, "and I only used half the powder. And, say! The buzzards got fooled again."

The three men stared at the boy and at one another. And then from the depths of some long past memory, Big Tom rustled up the words, "and a little child shall lead them."



The Whirlwind of Fate.*

BY GILBERT HINK.

HE Great Refusal," by Elizabeth Bertram Fawns, had just been refused; "The Declination of Ephraim," by Harlan Bates, had been declined, and "The Doom of David," by Ella Emmons Potts, was doomed.

The chief rejecter of the *Monitor Magazine* was earning his salary and exercising his infallible judgment in the choice of stories. He accepted every 216th offering.

He opened the 215th manuscript at peace with the world and with the love of mankind in his heart. Perhaps if this 215th manuscript had the semblance of merit he would accept it instead of the 216th, thus proving that merit alone influenced his choice of current fiction for the readers — a million copies monthly — of the *Monitor*.

He half promised himself that he would accept the 215th story just to prove that the milk of human kindness had not been chalked up as missing in his breast. He opened the long envelope with a thrust of an old brass column rule, which had outlived its usefulness in the composing-rooms.

The rejecter drew forth the folded manuscript and read in the upper right-hand corner of the first page (as per instructions in notes of regret from many magazines), the title of the story, the number of words and the name of the writer:

"The Whirlwind of Fate — 3500 words — Dawson Folkes Hermstone."

The rejecter began reading the opening phrases.

Just then a gentle breeze, the kind that makes paper-weights an absolute necessity in ten-story buildings, struck the opening pages of "The Whirlwind of Fate," and wafted them gently out of the neatly manicured finger of the rejecter, through the open

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window and out into the open air, beyond the editorial rooms of the *Monitor Magazine*.

"Ah! well, perhaps it's best," sighed the rejecter, tossing the 216th manuscript in with the sheep and what was left of No. 215 in with the myriad of goats.

"Perhaps that little whiff of April wind kept me from warping my literary judgment," facetiously remarked the rejecter to himself as he began counting out the next 216 manuscripts.

But the story does not end here.

The opening page of "The Whirlwind of Fate" that a chance breeze had wafted from the window bears further interest. Without assuming any of the characteristics of winged gods or soap that floats, let us follow this tender sprout of contemporaneous authorship as it drifts.

Emmet Snowdon, black, aged thirty-three, single — (I quote from hospital records) — was cleaning windows on the fourth floor of the Monitor Building. He looked up from his work of letting in the light and caught a glimpse of a bit of paper floating ever so gently down from the upper air. It was slightly beyond his solicitous grasp, but he leaned back to catch it as it fell.

I quote herein from the annals of the press:

> Emmet Snowdon, a window-cleaner, fell from the fourth story of the Monitor Building, Thursday morning, and in his precipitous drop to the sidewalk below, fell upon Officer O'Donnell of the ——th station. Snowdon sustained a broken leg and Officer O'Donnell a fracture of the skull. Both were taken to the White Sister's Hospital. They will recover.

The opening page of "The Whirlwind of Fate" evaded the clutch of the ill-flated window-cleaner and was taken in tow by an uprising wind that lifted it far above the tiles of the city's roofs and carried it gently down along the aristocratic surface of Avenue Y.

The Van Courtney maid and the Van Courtney coachman in the costly Van Courtney equipage were taking the Van Courtney poodle for the morning airing. "The Whirlwind of Fate" was wafted before the patrician nostril of the Van Courtney bays.

I quote again from the press:

> The splendid $10,000 Van Courtney team of bays ran away along Avenue Y, Thursday morning. Mlle. Antoi, the maid, was thrown from the carriage and severely hurt. Robert Antwerp, the coachman, sustained a broken leg, when the carriage crashed into an obstruction. The injured occupants of the carriage were taken to the White Sister's Hospital.

Another caprice of April caught "The Whirlwind of Fate" and swept it high above the aristocratic thoroughfare again. Long and far above the city was carried this offering to current literature.

Over in the solid residential section of the city, Herbert Coates, aged twelve, was proud in the possession of a new target rifle, presented by his father that morning on the occasion of the youngster's twelfth birthday. From the portico of the Coates residence, the young marksman saw, drifting down from the soft April skies, a fluttering square of white. He hurriedly rammed a cartridge into the new rifle and fired at the fast descending page.

The press said:

> Martha McDonnell, a domestic employed in the household of Dr. F. G. Schuyler, was shot by some unknown person, Thursday morning. The bullet, from a small target rifle, entered the woman's left cheek, causing a very serious wound. The police, called to investigate, advance the theory that the woman was the victim of the accidental discharge of a rifle in that immediate neighborhood. The woman was taken to the White Sister's Hospital for treatment.

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The chief rejecter of the *Monitor Magazine,* tired by the arduous task of selecting short stories at the ratio of 215 to 1, walked slowly homeward at the close of a pleasant April day.

At the edge of a carefully attended lawn, the toe of his shoe brushed forth a page of white. Through curiosity he picked up the square that had dared deface the shining surface of his shoe.

"The opening page of the ill-fated, gallant 215th, as I live," exclaimed the rejecter. "Well, how in the world did that get away out here?"

And then he read the title half aloud:

"The Whirlwind of Fate."

"What a hackneyed theme," he commented, idly.

Then, as if his curiosity has been piqued by the odd rescue of the missing page, he read the opening sentence:

This is a story of peace; of the quietude of country lanes and rural scenes where not a breath of vagrant winds shall come to mar the peaceful serenity of the day.

"Not enough action in the story —" was the condemnation of the critic.

Loyalty of Race.*

BY FLORENCE TABOR CRITCHLOW.

THE dog was given to Miss Hoffman by Ebbert himself. He was born in Ebbert's stables, fed and trained by Ebbert's own hand. That is why his conduct seemed so curious — for Ebbert was a kind man. He was never known to strike an animal. He discharged Ben Hudson for abusing horses, and, they say, turned off a good housekeeper, because he saw her kick the cat.

He had an almost uncanny understanding with all the living creatures of the farm and forest. He did not try to bring them to his plane, to teach them silly imitations of humanity. He seemed almost to belong to their world, so subtle was his comprehension of them, so strange his powers over them. In old England he would have been feared and consulted, as a supernaturally wise man; in early New England, he might have been hung as a wizard. Here in the Newer West we saw him merely as a man extraordinarily skilled in woodcraft.

Perhaps we wondered sometimes whence he obtained his superior knowledge, in a land where every man is necessarily a woodsman. For, though more at home in the wilderness than were we, its own children, he was not one of us. He came from some foreign land, and bought the old Cassell ranch, long abandoned as unproductive.

Ebbert didn't try to raise grain. He turned the whole ranch into a timber and game preserve, where he raised those wild creatures not elsewhere protected. It wasn't meat he sold, but furs, and heads, and museum specimens. Rare birds colonized his estate, because they soon learned that their nests were protected, each from its natural enemies, the others.

It was a beautiful property that he made of the worthless

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old ranch, when his plantings began to cover the scars of Cassell's reckless cuttings. Ebbert loved, not only every bird and beast, but every shrub and tree, every herb and vine, even to the golden thread. He was almost crazy for fear he wouldn't be able to pay the mortgage.

Yet, he could have raised the entire amount — it was only two thousand dollars — if he had been willing to part with some of his dogs. Why, old Rud Baker offered him five hundred dollars for one pair. Nobody knew the breed, only that there were none like them in our part of the world. Ebbert said that they had been owned only by one family for hundreds of years, and that they were never sold. We named them Protectors, though they were not in the least of the sheepdog type.

Not a bird, nor a squirrel, nor a rabbit, on Ebbert's ranch, was afraid of his dogs. Yet not a marauder of any sort could safely cross his boundaries, unless Ebbert himself were in sight. He loved those dogs better than all else on the place. They were loyal to him, too, but they never slobbered over him, in the dog-fashion of loving.

They were all descended from the one pair he brought with him to California. Race was the youngest of the breed, and the finest. He was nearly as large as a Great Dane, built like a mastiff, with a square head, and powerful forelegs. His coat, not curly, but thick and fine, was yellow with gray trimmings, showing his direct descent from the primitive wolf stock. His strong jaw was unwrinkled, except in anger. In his beautiful eyes was the sorrow of a thousand years of dumbness.

When Ebbert gave Race to Ermentrude Hoffman we all considered it equivalent to a public proposal of marriage.

Old Hoffman and his daughter lived in the wildest part of the forest, as far as possible from the settlement. They had no neighbors. The road ended at their rough cabin. They came to California before Ebbert did. Hoffman built the road on from the Cassell ranch to his own garden. He had given up his professorship in a great university, to make a minute study of the flora of this unexplored region. A book was slowly growing under his hands; not a mushroom, nor a parasite, but a real book, in which every plant should have its biography and its picture.

Under the father's tuition Ermentrude learned to make the flower portraits, the photographs supplemented by painstaking color-drawings.

Ermentrude was like a rare orchis of the deeper forest silences, an aristocrat in face as in name, not at all resembling, save in the quality of her courage, the sturdy, middle-class Herr-professor. When the old man, scrambling after a new species of rock columbine, fell down the cañon, and injured his spine, the girl undertook to carry on his work.

He was reputed, among the ranchers, who could not understand his devotion to herbs, to be a miser, and to be searching for, and finding, gold, which was secreted under the dried plants. But the only income of which Ermentrude knew, was derived from his monthly contributions to a botanical journal. She brought the specimens to his bedside; he analyzed, and wrote descriptions.

His book was almost finished. He needed some specimens of a certain white bush-pea, as yet unknown to other scientists. They, indeed, had denied its existence. He had discovered it on the Cassell ranch. Cassell, in spite of Hoffman's agonized protest, had wantonly cut it down, — the only white bush-pea ever discovered. Even the memory of the tragedy hurt the old professor. But if it was a genuine species, not a mere sport, perhaps it would have sprouted again from the old roots. His daughter must try to find it.

Since the arrival of Ebbert, Ermentrude had never been on the place. She had heard of the dogs, and also of the character of the owner. There was a coarse sensuality about Ebbert, which made him repulsive to men, and feared of women. No one willingly visited him. It was whispered that he was trying to make money in various unlawful ways, that his dogs were a protection to more than the birds, that they guarded their master from men in uniforms as well as from hoboes in rags. Having business, however, it never occurred to Ermentrude to be afraid. Brown bears, wolves, and even mountain lions, lurked in the woods, yet she always went her ways. Why should she shrink from tame dogs?

Ebbert, as it happened, was where he could see her when she crossed his lines. He thought it a good opportunity to test the

young dog, Race. To Ebbert's amazement, Race, instead of opposing the trespasser, rushed upon her with affectionate pawings.

"You've made his acquaintance before," Ebbert jealously accused her, coming from his concealment. She had difficulty in making him accept her denial. In the end, he was obliged to give Race to her, because the dog refused to leave her side. From that day he became the young woman's protector in all of her dangerous explorations, and slept at her threshold.

Ebbert cultivated her acquaintance. They became warm friends. She liked him first because he could talk to her in the German, her dear mother-tongue. He showed her only the best side of his nature, his tenderness for life, his intimate knowledge of the woods, his pitiful care of injured animals and broken plants. He had tended the bruised white bush-pea, not from any botanical interest, but because he could not bear to see it suffer. He hated cut flowers. He said it was wrong to despoil them of their life for our little hour of pleasure.

You can see how she came to believe that those other stories about him were only malicious gossip. Every woman likes to think that she has found a man's better nature, while it is yet unknown to the world. I suppose that Ermentrude had the same delight in discovering Ebbert, that her father had in finding a forty-first variety of Mary's bedstraw.

When Ermentrude introduced Race to her father, the Professor cried out, excitedly:

"A golden wolf, a golden wolf! How came he here?"

She explained. He shook his head disappointedly.

"I had thought there were no other dogs in the world like our famous Goldenwolf breed."

Then she understood that he spoke the name of her mother's family. She begged him to tell her more about them. But he could not bear to speak of her mother, his beloved wife. He promised that all she ought to know was written in a book, which she should read when he was dead.

She had not long to wait. The book was finished. So was its author's life. He had existed solely for it. When the first copies arrived he passed away, satisfied with a completed work. After the unique burial service under the dark sequoias,

when the rest of us had gone home, Ebbert stayed on for a time. He was the gloomier of the two. His mortgage was due next day. He did not speak of this to her. He urged her to go to stay in the village with the women. He reminded her of several recent robberies, and the lack of discretion it showed for her to stay alone in a house which was reported to be lined with gold.

"No," she resisted, with her quiet kind of courage. "Of course those stories are nonsense. We have had barely enough to live on. It is true, I have two thousand dollars in the house, but no one knows anything about that. The publishers sent the actual money, in a parcel, because they know how far we are from a bank. Father was very happy to know that I am provided for. If I should go to the village, I could hardly prevent some one learning of the money I must carry with me. No tramps ever come here, and no one will guess the presence of this money in this poor log cabin."

When he had gone, she placed the parcel of money in her own room, and left Race there. In her father's room, she opened the book, not the great Book into which he had poured all of his life, but the manuscript volume in which her mother had written the history of the Goldenwolf family, for the instruction of her daughter.

They were an old, old family. A knight, returning from the crusades, brought, with his foreign wife, her pet, a magnificent yellow wolf. From this came the family surname. The union of the golden wolf with their own German mastiffs produced a famous breed of dogs. None were ever sold, or given, save to members of the family.

One characteristic, invaluable in a ruder age, and rare in our own, distinguished them. Wherever they were, and in whatever circumstances, they constituted themselves the protectors of the women of the family. One daughter marrying a robber baron, of brutal manners, carried with her to the new home one of the famous goldenwolves. The first time her husband struck her, after the manner of his tribe, the dog, without a sound, leaped at his throat, bore him to the ground, and slew him, despite the interference of his retainers. Other tales there were, of

the devotion of these splendid animals to their mistresses.

Much else, too, Ermentrude read, of the feuds, the marriages, the wealth, the honors, the pride of her mother's family. Bound in with the manuscript were the letters received by the elder Ermentrude, after coming to America with her poor husband. One of these letters concerned the dogs, narrating that a forester employed on the estate, named Eberhardt, discharged for robbery, had stolen two of the famous dogs.

When Ermentrude finished the volume, and put out her light, the radiant silence of a forest midnight enveloped her. Far off she heard the cry of a mountain lion. Once, the house creaked in the wind. There was no other sound. She slept, and woke in the warmth of the morning sun, with the silence still all about the cabin. For a time she lay quiet, thinking of her mother's family, of the strange resemblance of Race to the dogs described there, and of plans for her marriage. Her father had wished her to return to Germany, and to allow her uncles to arrange a marriage suitable to her position. It seemed to her that the story of her mother's love-marriage justified her own. She was sure that all Ebbert needed to make him a gentleman was the steady influence of a good woman. She knew that he was in want of money. She would pay off his mortgage for him.

She rose, and opened the door into her own room, where her morning dresses hung. Instantly, she drew back, with a quick, involuntary cry. Then she recalled her self-control.

On the floor, athwart her threshold, lay the body of a man, face downward. In his hand was the parcel of money. Race lay upon the body. He lifted his head at her cry, then dropped it sullenly. He had attacked the robber from behind, as the man had attempted to open the door of his mistress's room. He had not interfered to protect the money.

In a crisis, people do inexplicably silly things. Ermentrude found herself lifting the edge of her trailing white wrapper lest it touch the floor where the dead robber lay. She knew that he was dead. She could not tell how she knew. She wanted to see his face. It seemed as though it took an hour to bend her body until she could touch his hair. Race snarled at her. Nevertheless, she lifted the head, turned it slowly. She wished she hadn't. She had

known, for all the aeons since the world began, what she must see.

It was the face of her dead lover, Ebbert.

With the courage of her ancestors all condensed in her slender body, she forced herself to dress, in the room with — that, — and came to the settlement for help. When we bore the body from the house, Race followed. Not once did he look back, even when Ermentrude called him. He kept continuous watch until the coffin was lowered into the grave. For Ebbert had been kind to him, had raised him with his own hand.

Nor would he leave the grave itself until Ermentrude came to fetch him. You will never again see his like in this land. For Ermentrude took all of the goldenwolf dogs back with her to the fatherland.

The Woman and the Other Four.*

BY EDWIN CARLILE LITSEY.

THE woman, the person, the gambler, the heathen, and the church pillar — five of us, were left when the storm at last made an end of the *Isobel*. It had driven her hundreds of miles from her course, bobbing her about cork-fashion on uncharted seas, and finally rending her strained timbers asunder as some wild thing of the jungle destroys its helpless victim after tiring of sporting with it. The devil rode the waves that night, accompanied by cohorts of screaming fiends.

The *Isobel* was a trading ship, plying between Havana and Rio de Janeiro. Two days out the hurricane took us, and three days we drove before it, helpless as a chip in a mountain torrent. For the character of vessel, we had a fairly large and much diversified passenger list. Four o'clock in the morning the fatal moment came. Most of the women passengers and a few of the men were sleeping from exhaustion. It was a razor-like reef which did the work, and the *Isobel* split like a halved orange. There was no time for thought; less time for action. There were wild cries, groans, piteous supplications to heaven, then darkness and the roar of the demon-ridden waves.

Strange and apparently impossible situations are frequently evolved from wrecks. In the present instance, those occupying quarters forward on the hurricane deck awoke from chaos to discover that something solid was beneath them, though the spray from the constantly recurring waves drenched them every few moments. When I realized I was not being driven headlong fathoms deep in the sea, but that a precarious foothold of some sort had been given me, I called loudly, and asked if any others had been fortunate enough to find the same refuge. Voices came out of the darkness; two women and two men answered. They

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were close to hand, but I cautioned them not to move, but to wait for daylight, which would quickly come. The gray light revealed them — a sorry, draggled company.

The Woman was nearest me. She was an American lady of much refinement, who had spent most of her time reading on board ship. She plainly had not disrobed the night before, probably anticipating the very thing which had happened. Of course she was drenched, and her heavy, plaited hair was sopping against her neck. Her face was serious, but bore no trace of fright.

Further off to one side was The Person. She was a Spanish dancing-girl from a Havana music hall. Her time aboard had been spent in open flirtation with the steward. Daring, debonair and fatalistic, she had retired the night before in her customary manner, and in consequence sat shivering now in a nightgown of transparent texture, her black, tightly curling hair falling barely to her shoulders. The rouge had been washed from her cheeks and the carmine from her lips, and she was a wan and pathetic figure.

Standing ten feet from her was The Gambler. I knew him, though we were not friends. He was fully dressed, with the exception of a hat, even to a light raincoat. He was tall, very pale, smooth faced and polished. There was a reserve in his bearing which was most attractive. His view-point of life must have been a pleasant one, for his steady eyes often showed gleams of amusement, and a shadowy smile often played about his fine mouth. He belonged to the States, and was the degenerate scion of a noble Southern family.

Huddled at The Gambler's feet, with his arms around his knees, was The Church Pillar. I knew him, too, by sight. He had been a bank cashier who had looted his institution back in Illinois, and was fleeing from his Government's officers. The papers had his story. It was a bad one, for under a cloak of godliness he had lived a life of greed, culminating in an enormous theft. The inevitable exposure had followed, and he had fled in disguise. Now he was seeking some little known corner of the earth in which to live, and the bitter irony of Fate was expressed in his present predicament. He had the stolen funds on his person, and I wondered what luxuries he was going to purchase with them at present.

I was The Heathen. The title was really a misnomer, for I am an educated, civilized gentleman, but I do not think there is any corner of the world my feet have not pressed, apart from the poles, and my adventures and explorations had led me more often among heathen peoples. Hence the sobriquet, bestowed without malice by one of my friends, and cheerfully adopted by many of the others.

These were the five survivors the unfolding mists disclosed the morning after the wreck. The hurricane had passed on to the South, but the sea was still high. By the time we could fairly discern ourselves and get an idea of the size and formation of the rock upon which we were cast, the sun came out with magical swiftness. I call our refuge a rock, but it was in reality a small island. Tiny enough it was, not over a hundred feet long, by fifty wide at its broadest place. A solitary palm grew in the centre; aged, stunted, pathetic. The soil about its base was too scanty to permit of any other verdure. Some twenty feet beyond it, to the west, was a high ridge of rock; on the other side of this the formation dwindled down to a small, rocky beach.

None of us spoke as the day broadened around us. We were literally overcome by the calamity and its terrible significance. Apparently there was no means of sustaining life, and death in the water would have been preferable to death from starvation. No one moved or made a sound until the sun burst through the mist. Then each forlorn figure stirred in unconscious appreciation. Here at least was warmth and cheer.

The Gambler looked slowly from one to the other, then removed his raincoat, and went and placed it gently about the shoulders of The Person. She smiled her thanks, drew it together under her chin and laid its skirts over her knees. His thoughtful attention brought me to my senses, and I arose and offered my coat to The Woman. She declined the courtesy with a few low words of appreciation, saying that the sun would dry her quicker without it. The same thought had come to The Gambler, for he spoke at this juncture in a clear, pleasant voice.

"I suggest that we men retire beyond that ridge of rock, and allow the ladies time in which to dry their clothing. By removing the greater portion of it and spreading it out in the sun,

this can be accomplished more quickly. They can call, or come to us at the proper time."

The proposition was evidently such an excellent one that we acted upon it at once. As we passed The Church Pillar, The Gambler had to grasp him by the shoulder, and shake him gently. He had totally collapsed, and all spirit had gone from him. He was a man slightly past middle age, and as he arose his knees trembled so that he walked with difficulty. I knew his condition was due entirely to terror, for on the ship he had been active. We helped him over the barrier of jagged stones which was to serve as a partition in the drying process, and under the influence of a series of optimistic comments from The Gambler, he began to take a little heart. The three of us removed all of our outer clothing and stretched it out, placing stones upon the ends of our trousers' legs to keep them from shrinking. Then we dispersed in search of any kind of animal or vegetable life which would serve for food. All we found were a few small crabs clinging to the moist rocks nearest the sea, but these we secured and conveyed to a safe spot, for, repulsive as they were, we knew the time would quickly come when we would be glad of their possession. Then we sat near our clothes — a sorry group — and faced the situation.

The Gambler took charge of the meeting, and he was far more fitted for a leader than either The Church Pillar or myself. He was cool and sane under all circumstances. He said plainly that our case was about hopeless as far as he could see. He had no idea where we were, except that we had been driven into unknown waters, out of the track of ships. With no water and little food the strongest of us would not last over ten days. What was there to do? Nothing. Sit still and wait for the thirst-pangs and the hunger-agony until we went crazy, or died. That was our prospect, and The Gambler spoke our universal doom without a tremor in his voice. He was a very brave man.

After a time our clothes dried and we put them on. The sun was getting very hot, and each of us was conscious of thirst. The Woman and The Person appeared now, coming over the southern end of the rock ridge, which was not so tall. The Person had put on The Gambler's raincoat and it completely enveloped her,

reaching to the ground. We greeted them pleasantly as they came up, then made a tour of our prison in a body. The *Isobel* had left no trace behind. It was as though we had alighted from the air upon this barren spot.

Near midday the heat grew so intense that we suffered acutely. The Woman came to me privately, and asked if there was any hope. I told her the truth as I saw it. She sighed, and turned away bravely. None of us ate any that day. We were hungry, but it would require a condition bordering on starvation for us to devour the crabs. When night came the two other men and I made a bed of our coats and vests for the female portion of our party, on a small stretch of sand we were lucky enough to find. We slept on the rocks. The next day thirst and hunger assailed us mercilessly, and midafternoon we ate the crabs. There was a degree of moisture in their bodies which allayed our thirst to some extent, but when the sun began to beat down upon us the following morning, we knew that we could not long endure the misery which began to beset us poignantly. We sat or reclined in apathetic silence.

Twice during the morning The Church Pillar had gone beyond the ridge of rock alone. He went a third time shortly after midday, and when he had disappeared, The Gambler arose and followed. It was not long before he reappeared, bearing an armful of cocoanuts. The story he told us was almost past belief, yet it plainly was true. He had seen The Church Pillar go to a cache in the northernmost point of the rock ridge, and draw forth a cocoanut. First he punctured the eyes of the nut with his knife blade and drank the milk, then he broke the shell and feasted on the meat. This while his companions — two of them women — were starving ! The Gambler had pounced down upon him in just indignation, forced him to tell how he had come by the fruit, then had confiscated his store. The rest of us had overlooked the probability of fruit on the stunted palm, but on the night succeeding our first day on the island the shrewd mind of The Church Pillar had led him to surreptitiously investigate the tree while the remainder of the party were sleeping from exhaustion. Hidden in its feathery top where eight fine cocoanuts, which he had secured and stored away for his private use. Two of them he

had eaten, and the other six now lay at the feet of The Gambler.

We were speechless from amazement when we heard this tale of base treachery. The Gambler selected the largest nut, punched out the eyes, and gave it first to The Woman to drink. She drank of the fluid sparingly, and handed the nut to The Person. The Dancer likewise took only two swallows, then I pressed it to my lips for a moment, and felt the mad joy of something moist and sweet upon my parched tongue. There was little left for The Gambler, but he accepted it uncomplainingly. Then he took a stone and broke the shell, and distributed the fragments among us. As we ate in silent enjoyment and gratification, The Church Pillar came up. He was angry, and spoke freely.

"That is my property!" he said, pointing to the pile of nuts on the ground. "Give them to me! You have robbed me of them!"

He advanced to take them.

The Gambler turned upon him a face with narrowed eyes and set jaws.

"Stand back," he answered, quite gently, but the other man paused. "Don't speak to me — to us — of robbery and theft. You have forfeited all right to any consideration from us. You are a Judas — you are the lowest traitor who ever lived! Do you see this?" He held up a small piece of the shattered nut. It was not over three inches square. "I value that at five thousand dollars. The milk which one of your cupped hands will hold is worth one thousand. Had you behaved as a man should, this slender store would have been served to all alike, a double portion to the ladies, but you have bartered your right to participate in the distribution of this food. If you had your just deserts, you would be left to starve. But you may play for your share. Five thousand dollars in cash against a bit of nut the size of this; one thousand dollars in cash against as much milk as one of your cupped hands will hold! You know my profession. Shall we begin at once?"

The speaker smiled, and drew from his pocket a deck of cards, which he held lightly between his fingers.

The Church Pillar turned pale.

"What do you mean?" he shrieked. "Give me my portion!"

With the words he made a rush, but The Gambler caught him

and flung him aside. He fell, but not heavily, and arose at once.

"No more tactics like that!" admonished the cold, clear voice. "When you get hungry, or thirsty, remember that I am ready to play."

He gathered the cocoanuts in his arms, and went to the sandy stretch and buried them, in order that the milk might keep cool.

None of us sought to question his action, nor did we have the wish to do so. The enormity of the crime which had been perpetrated against us had hardened our hearts. I knew The Woman and The Person were in the dark as to what The Gambler meant when he spoke of the money, and I wondered how he knew about it. But he was a strange man, and his business had to do with money solely.

All day The Gambler never went where he could not have an eye on the spot where the treasure was buried, and at night The Woman and The Person slept above the sunken store. The next afternoon hunger and thirst had done their work, and the first game was played. It took place on a great flat stone beyond the rock ridge. The Church Pillar insisted that he did not know one card from another, and that he was being robbed. I believed his first statement, and volunteered to assist him in playing his hand, to which his opponent agreed readily. I also held the stakes. The Church Pillar had drawn six one thousand dollar bills from somewhere about his person; five of them for the three-inch square piece of cocoanut, and one of them for the sup of milk. He quickly lost the game, although I honestly did my best for him, not because he deserved it, but because I could not help having a sort of pity for him. He duplicated the stakes upon The Gambler's calm suggestion, because it was that, or starve. Again he lost. In the end he paid twenty-four thousand dollars for that meal, and then only because The Gambler allowed him to win, not wishing to relieve him of all his pilfered possessions at one sitting. The Church Pillar was stony from helpless rage as he arose, and went off to a secluded spot and sat down. He came back almost at once.

"What will you sell me a whole nut for?" he asked, viciously. "That was not a taste you let me have!"

"I don't conduct a bargain counter," was the reply. "And

besides, that is as much as any of us receive at one time. We will play again in the morning at breakfast, if you wish."

At the hour named The Church Pillar was ready, and silently, mercilessly, The Gambler acquired thirty thousand dollars in cash in exchange for a small piece of cocoanut and a scanty mouthful of milk. Another morning the scene was enacted, then The Church Pillar declared that he had no more money. The Gambler did not believe him, and refused him food until he saw that the man's condition would soon become serious. Then he dealt out the meagre rations to him as he did to the rest of us. It was insufficient nourishment, at the best, and while it prevented absolute starvation, each of us had begun to experience a foretaste of the end. While The Woman and The Person were given a double portion each day, a dreadful weakness had seized them, accompanied by nausea, and they were unable to rise to their feet. Among the men, The Church Pillar suffered most, for he had lived a life of ease, and could not endure the least physical hardship. On the day when the last vestige of the last nut disappeared, he grew delirious for a time, and we had to hold him to prevent his dashing into the sea and drinking the salt water.

That night The Gambler and I sat together while the others slept from weakness. I was tough, but I was beginning to feel lightheaded and very unreal, and at times colored sparks danced before my eyes. The Gambler was pale, and his shoulders drooped, and I knew that his case was no better than my own. I shuddered as I thought of what the heat of another day would mean without sustenance of any kind. We were sitting side by side, in silence, and after a while our shoulders touched, our heads fell forward, and we slept. The strained position caused us to waken, almost simultaneously. On the quiet, moonlit sea just in front of us was a queer-looking little boat, with one sail. It was quite close, but I could see no sign of life aboard. The Gambler saw it, too, and swiftly, silently, he arose to his feet, then ran and plunged into the water. I struggled to my knees, and watched him. He was swimming towards it with remarkable swiftness for his enfeebled condition, and as he drew nearer the craft I saw a dusky form appear and throw him a rope. Soon after he was aboard.

All night long I sat and watched the boat hover about the island, and in the morning a mooring was found, and our little party was rescued. It turned out that the rock upon which we were cast was the least of a chain of islands further south. These islands were rich in cocoanuts and mangoes, but the most profitable industry practiced by the natives — a hybrid breed with a large mixture of Spanish — was tortoise fishing. The owner of the boat was on an exploring expedition when we sighted his craft.

We reached his island late that afternoon, moving slowly on account of the heavy cargo, and spent several months there before a vessel from a South American town stopped for water. The Gambler engaged passage on her for us, paying for the same with part of the money he had won from The Church Pillar, to whom he gave back the remainder just before we reached port.

. . . . . .

Five years later I chanced to enter a church in one of the larger cities of Kentucky. The man who arose to address the congregation was my old companion of the wreck incident — The Gambler. He detailed to his hearers the days and nights we spent on the island, confessed his former mode of living, and told how the close approach of death had wakened in him a sense of his wickedness, and this, coupled to his experience with the sham Christian, had made him resolve to lead a life of service. He went on to relate how The Church Pillar, who was ruled by cupidity, had become so impressed by the ease with which a skilled card player could win money, that after his deliverance he had taken up gambling as a profession, and was now operating in the principal eastern towns.

He did not mention The Woman or The Person, but the former got back to her friends safely, and the latter returned to her old business before the footlights.

As for The Heathen — he still has the wanderlust, and was off for Thibet within two weeks.

The Mystery of the Missing Shirt.*

BY A. E. SWOYER.

(With abject apologies to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.)

ERLOCK SHOMES, the great detective, sat, pipe in mouth, idly strumming a banjo. Times were dull in the sleuthing business, and our hero had not the price of his regular shot of hop; no mysterious murders nor clueless robberies sought his mighty brain for a solution. The truth must be told — the peerless Shomes *was* on his uppers!

"Great days, these, Fatson!" he said, carefully emptying the ashes from his pipe into a bit of paper, and dexterously rolling it into a cigarette. "Great days! No work for me; no annals for you to chronicle (at so much per chronic) for posterity! It seems as if the pleasures of a neat murder no longer appeal to the strong-arm man; we are becoming a race of mollycoddles!" A tear for a moment dimmed the eagle eye of Shomes, trickled gently down his classic nose and lost itself in the stubble of his two weeks' beard.

"Education has done it," replied his friend. "The real brainy criminal has learned that it is easier and more genteel to start a bank than to break into one; while the monetary results are the same. But, cheer up, Shomes, nothing can keep a good man down but a tombstone or a cash register!"

"You are right, Fatson! And even now I feel that in exactly five minutes, by yonder clock, a client, the victim of a dark and awful crime, will come —"

A ponderous knocking at the door interrupted him. Rising, hastily, he set the clock ahead five minutes. "Thus is the power of deduction vindicated! Right to the minute! Fatson, open the door. It is our client! (Or, perhaps, the landlord for last Jan-

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uary's rent," he muttered, aside. "'Tis well I were not seen!")

Before the faithful Fatson could reach the door, it opened, and a tall man, with a huge and shaggy beard, entered and sank heavily into a chair; the latter, not built for heavy sinking, collapsed. The strange visitor continued until stopped by the floor.

"Aha!" said Shomes. "I see that you are the victim of a slight accident! You wonder how I know? These things are easy to the trained mind! Fatson, you remember the interesting little problem of the Emerald Frankfurter, in which this power enabled me to trace a clue the dull wits of the police had not even seen?"

The stranger, who, framed amid the wreckage of the broken chair, had been listening, open mouthed, now rose. "Mr. Shomes," said he, "you are the man I need! Something mysterious and dreadful threatens me! I am a marked man! Last evening —" the trembling tones of this strong man made even the callous Fatson shiver — "last evening, as an evidence of this power, the very shirt was stolen from my back. You, alone, can save me!"

"This is, indeed, a mystery, a case after my own heart. I can see in it the hand of that master criminal, Desperate Desmond, who has thwarted me for years! Our lives are all in danger! But come, tell me the details."

"They are few enough. In the first place, my name is Dalrymple. I run a doughnut foundry, and am fairly well to do. Last evening I dressed carefully to go to the club; I remember my undershirt particularly, it was of the knitted kind I always wear, but new. I spent an hour at the club, and on retiring found the shirt was gone! My outer shirt, vest, and coat were intact."

"H'm!" said Shomes. "You must have been robbed of this — er — undergarment, then, either in your home, at the club, or between the two places!"

"Marvelous!" ejaculated, Fatson.

Shomes, with the remarkable agility he always showed when on a clue, whipped out a pocket rule and measured the distance between Dalrymple's eyes. Swiftly he entered the results in a

large ledger. "'Tis, indeed, Desmond's work!" he muttered. "We must be quick! Mr. Dalyrmple, may I have a sample of your whiskers? It is important! Thanks." Snipping off a generous portion of the guest's lace curtains, he turned his back, stuffed them into his pipe and began smoking, vigorously.

Again turning to his guest, he shot the question, "Have you dined? No? Good! Then we will accompany you — you must not be alone!"

Dashing to the table, he seized a celluloid paper-cutter and placed it in his pocket. "This is a desperate case — we must go armed!" he gritted, with a sinister scowl. "Fatson, call a taxi. And," he hissed, in a tone so low that Dalrymple could not catch the words, "don't get that gink on the corner, you lunkhead! Remember, we hung him up last week!"

Quickly disguising himself, by turning up his coat collar, the great detective led Fatson and Dalrymple to the door.

In three-quarters of an hour the speeding taxi landed the party at a famous restaurant two blocks away. "Fatson and I will enter first, Mr. Dalrymple," muttered Shomes. "We must not be seen together!"

"Why did you leave him, Shomes?" asked Fatson, timidly, as they hurried into the restaurant.

"Fatson! Fatson! You will never be a great detective. Don't you know that the last man out pays the taxi? You would do well to read my monograph upon the subject."

The meal passed in silence, save for the voice of Dalrymple ordering fresh supplies. Like all great men, Shomes sometimes went for days without a meal, particularly when broke; then he ate ravenously. So it was on this occasion. Fatson, being an opportunist, did likewise. Dalrymple watched them with ever increasing respect. "I am glad the other fellow got my *shirt!*" he muttered, as he paid the check.

At the scenes of the crime, as Shomes called them until he could determine which was the scene, the famous sleuth was at his best. Magnifying-glass in hand, he poked and measured everywhere, entering notes in the big ledger which Fatson carried. From time to time he put choice bits of evidence, such as a bottle of

Wilson's, a few cigars, and about a quire of the club paper, into his pockets; clues like these could not escape the eagle eye of Shomes.

Finally he rose. "Mr. Dalrymple," he said, proudly, "I know the criminal! No further attempt will be made upon your life to-night! Go home, and to-morrow night I will have news for you! Fatson and I will now retire."

The next day was a busy one for both Fatson and Shomes. The former went about his medical labors in the veterinary department of the S. P. C. A; the noted sleuth elected to experiment in his laboratory, as cool and collected as if Dalrymple were not compelled by a fiendish crime to wear his extra shirt. He refused to satisfy Fatson's curiosity by any statement other than "To-night we shall know all!"

The day passed slowly for Fatson. Twice his boss called him down for an abstraction which caused him to inject strychnine into the veins of horses used by members of the Society, instead of those of less fortunate equines placed in his hands for a painless quietus. Annoyed by these trifles, Fatson returned, to find Shomes deep in one of those profound chemical researches which would have made him famous in the world of science had he cared to follow such a life. In the present instance, he was trying to make a rye high ball out of wood alcohol and lithia water.

"How's the case?" asked Fatson, cheerfully.

"We haven't had a case for a month, you rummy!" retorted Shomes. The last one we had you finished up when I wasn't around. Got soused on two bottles, too! Thank you for reminding me of it!"

"I meant the case of the stolen shirt," replied Fatson, hurriedly.

"Oh — that! The crime was committed by a tall, dark, red-headed man, with a scar on his left cheek — a tool of Desmond's! I have decoyed him here to-night. He thinks to find money and jewels; instead, he will find *me!*" No one but Shomes could have been so deadly menacing.

The telephone jangled. Shomes tore down the receiver.

"That you, Shomes? This is Dalrymple. Remember that shirt business? Well, we were scared for nothing. It seems that at the club, Smith — he's a trifle near-sighted — thought he saw a